

John Henry on Christmas Presents

By GEORGE V. HOBART

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"Did you ever take what little was left and start out to buy friend wife a Christmas token?"

A quaint pastime, is it not?

Well, to make a long story lose its cunning, I clinked a few iron men together one morning recently and started out to find something new and nifty in the gift line for Peaches.

I was breezing for a department store when I ran across Hep Hardy, limping in the direction of a taxicab stand.

"Up late, aren't you, Hep?" I inquired, glancing at the Waterbury.

"I sure am running behind my schedule this morning, John, Hep wheezed. "Accident."

"What's the matter? Fuse blow out and leave you and your favorite bartender in darkness?" I ventured.

"Nix," he answered, "I interpolated a new step in the Tango about five this a. m. and my partner, an impulsive little thing from Spokane, didn't get my signal, with the result that she stepped on me and lost one of her French heels somewhere between my ankle and my instep. I had to wait till a Doctor Shop was open so he could probe for it. The medicine peddler found it all right and my left wheel is a bit wobbly, but I'll be in the roped arena tonight when the bell rings, clamoring for my favorite rag, you can bet on that, John, old pal."

"The dance bug has you for fair, hasn't it, Hep?" I laughed.

"Not at all," Hep came back; "but like a lot of other ginks who have been going through life with stoop shoulders and plantation feet I've suddenly discovered how to be graceful and I have to stay up all night to see if other people notice it. Where are you going?"

"I'm going down to see one of those stores and make a fool out of fifty dollars—little Christmas presents for Peaches," I answered.

"Fifty dollars!" Hep sneered. "Say, John, if I had a wife, and we were speaking to each other, fifty dollars wouldn't buy the ribbon around the bundle. Fifty dollars! You make a noise like a pike."

"Sure!" I snapped back. "If you had a wife you'd take her down to your favorite jewelry store and let the clerks throw diamonds at her till they felt exhausted. But I'm just a regular



A Lot of Eager Dames Were Pawing Over Some Chinchilla Ribbon.

human being, working for a living, and every time I see a hundred dollar bill I get red in the face and want a drink of water. You know, Hep, my father didn't spend his life wrapping it up in bundles and throwing it into an iron woodshed against the time I became old enough to use it as a torch!"

"Say!" chirped Hep, who hadn't paid the slightest attention to what I was saying, "why don't you get her an emerald necklace? Some idea—what? I saw one the other day for \$8,000. Wait a minute! I'll give you a card to the manager."

"Give it to the chauffeur," I said as I pushed Hep into the taxi. "By the time he gets you home you'll owe him enough to buy emeralds."

Then I left him flat and moneyed off for a department store to get a Christmas present for friend wife.

Say! did you ever get tangled up in one of those department store mobs and have a crowd of perfect ladies use you for a doormat?

I got mine!

They certainly taught me the Fluor-ta glide, all right!

At the door a nice young man with a pink necktie and a quick forehead bowed to me.

"What do you wish?" he asked.

"Well," I said, "I'm down here to get a Christmas present for friend wife. I would like something which would afford her some pleasure when I give it to her and which I could use afterward as a penwiper or a fishing rod."

"Second floor—to the right—to take the elevator," said the man.

Did you ever try to take an elevator in a department store and find that 3,943 other American citizens and citizenesses were also trying to take the same elevator?

How sweet it is to mingle in the arms of utter strangers and to feel the pressure of a foot we never hope to meet again!

I was standing by one of the counters on the second floor when a shrill voice cried up over a few bales of dry goods and said, "Are you a buyer or a handler?"

"I am looking for a Christmas present for friend wife," I answered. "I want to get something that will look swell on the parlor table and may be used later on as a tobacco jar or a trouser stretcher!"

"Fourth floor—to the left—take the elevator!" said the shrill voice, but shriller.

With bowed head I walked away. I began to feel sorry for friend wife. Nobody seemed to be very much interested whether she got a Christmas present or not.

On the fourth floor I stopped at a counter where a lot of eager dames were pawing over some chinchilla ribbon and chiffon overskirts.

It reminded me of the way an emotional hen digs up a grub in the garden.

I enjoyed the excitement of the game for about ten minutes and then I said to the clerk behind the counter who was refereeing the match, "Can you tell me where I can buy a sterling silver Christmas present for friend wife which I could use afterward as a night key or a bath sponge?"

"Fifth floor—to the rear—take the elevator!" said the clerk.

On the fifth floor I went over to a table where a young lady was selling "The Life and Libraries of Andrew Carnegie" at four dollars a month and fifty cents a week, and in three years it is yours if you don't lose the receipts.

She gave me a glad smile and I felt a thrill of encouragement.

"Excuse me," I said, "but I am looking for a Christmas present for friend wife which will make all the neighbors jealous, and which I can use afterward as an ash receiver or a pocket flask."

The young lady cut out the giggles and pointed to the northwest.

I went over there.

To my surprise I found another counter.

A pale young woman was behind it. I was just about to ask her the fatal question when a young man wearing a racing expression on his face rushed up and said to the pale young lady behind the counter: "I am looking for a suitable present for a young lady friend of mine with golden brown hair. Could you please suggest something?"

The pale young woman showed her teeth and answered him in a low, rumbling voice, and the man went away.

Then came an old lady who said: "I bought some organdie dress goods for a shirt waist last Tuesday, and I would like to exchange them for a music box for my daughter's little boy, Freddie, if you please!"

The pale young woman again showed her teeth and the old lady ducked for cover.

After about fifty people had rushed up to the pale young woman and then rushed away again, I went over and spoke to her.

AN EXPENSIVE INSTITUTION

But Cost of Christmas Pays Big Returns in Joy and Happiness of Children.

Christmas is a very costly institution. It makes deep holes in millions of well-filled pockets. Father's hand reaches into his pocket more often in the few weeks before Christmas than during any other period of equal extent in the whole year. And lots of money goes for presents that, in the hands of happy children, last a very short time. Nightfall of Christmas day sees many toys in mangled heaps that bright and shining and new greeted the little folks as they hopped out of bed Christmas morning. And millions and millions of things are bought that never would be, if it were not for Christmas. But does all this mean that Christmas is not worth the money it costs, that it would be better if the world did not observe the anniversary of Christ's birth in the way it does? Nobody in the whole wide Christian part of the world will say that Christmas does not pay for itself, that it is not worth all its costs, and that it is not a bargain at any price. Where can be found a father and mother who feel that they have been cheated by Christmas, after they hear the gurgling laughter of their children, in ecstasy among their new toys, even if there had to be skimping and saving of pennies to buy the little presents?—Savannah News.

THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS

One Day of the Year That All Other Days Are Learning to Envy and Imitate.

It seems to me that always, as the 24th of December commenced to shorten, the white, fleecy snow began to fall, says a writer in the Craftsman. When the street lamps flickered up like candles on an altar, they gazed on a world that was white. The strife of the city was muffled. Carts went by, but you had to peer out through the blinds to know that they were passing—they made no sound. An atmosphere of gentleness had descended. Everyone in the house went about with stealth, as though planning some secret kindness.

And then the night and the trying to keep awake till Santa Claus should come. And the waking up, with the frost weaving patterns on the panes. Somewhere far away a harp was being played, and a cornet was challenging the silence. The tune they played was an accompaniment to the most beautiful legend in the world. At first, dreamily, you tried to remember why for once the darkness was not frightening, and then, "Ah, it's Christmas!" As you turned, your feet made

"I am looking," I said, "for a Christmas present for friend wife. I want to get something that will give her a great amount of pleasure and which I can use later on as a pipe cleaner or a pair of suspenders!"

The pale young woman faints, so I moved over.

At another counter another young lady said to me: "Have you been waiting?"

"No," I replied; "I have been stepped on, sat on and walked on, but I have not yet been waited on."

"What do you wish?" inquired the young woman.

"I am looking for a Christmas present for friend wife," he said. "I want to buy her something that will bring great joy to her heart, and which I might use afterward as a pair of slippers or a shaving mug."

The young lady caught me with her dreamy eyes and held me up against the wall.

"You," she screamed, "you complete a total of 25,493 people who have been in this department store today without knowing what they are doing here."



The Pale Young Woman Fainted.

and I refuse to be a human encyclopedia for the sake of eight dollars a week. Go on now; throw yourself into second speed and climb the hill!"

I began to apologize, but she reached down under the counter and pulled out a club.

"This," she said, with a wild look in her side lamps, "this is happy Yuletide, but, nevertheless, the next guy that leaves his brains at home and tries to make me tell him what is a good Christmas present for his wife will get a bitter wallop across the forehead!"

The girl was right, so I went home without a present.

I suppose I'll have to take Hep's tip and get those emeralds after all. But first I'll go down to the delicatessen store and see if there's anything there.

THE EUROPEAN WAR A YEAR AGO THIS WEEK

Dec. 6, 1914.

Allies made further advances in northern France. Germans occupied Lodz, and drove a wedge into Russian center. One of the Przemyśl forts fell. Russians shelled Cracow at long range.

Turks occupied Keda. Forty British and French war vessels arrived off the Dardanelles. Russian aviators attacked Breslau forts.

French aviators attacked Freiburg.

Dec. 7, 1914.

Allies in West began general offensive. Belgians repulsed German boat attack along Yser canal.

Germans in Alsace fell back. Russians bombarded Cracow suburbs and besieged fortress of Lodz.

Germans abandoned Zgierz. Serbians checked Austrian advance.

British steamer Charcas sunk by German transport in Pacific. Arrow dropped by aviator killed Major General von Meyer.

Ostend was set on fire by aeroplane bombs. Bomb from German aeroplane killed ten in Hazebruck. Government of Holland lent wheat to Belgium.

Dec. 8, 1914.

German headquarters moved from Roulers. Germans renewed attack on Dixmude.

Turks were defeated near Batum.

British squadron under Vice-Admiral Sturdee defeated German squadron under Admiral von Spee off Falkland islands, sinking the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Leipzig and Nürnberg.

Prince von Buelow reached Rome as German ambassador. Two sections of Austrian Red Cross left Italy for Serbia.

Dec. 9, 1914.

Belgians took German trenches on the Yser by a ruse.

Germans shelled Ypres and Furnes. Serbians recaptured Valjevo and Ushirza from Austrians.

Germans lost heavily in attack on Lodz. Austrians defeated near Cracow.

Turks at Kurna surrendered to Indian troops. Polish-American relief committee formed.

Dec. 10, 1914.

Germans evacuated Roulers and Armentieres.

French were victorious at Vermelles. Serbians took many Austrians and large stores of supplies.

Revolution in Union of South Africa declared ended. British took 1,100 Turkish prisoners and nine guns.

German submarine raid on Dover was repulsed by the forts. Czech regiments in Austrian army refused to fight against the Serbians.

Military control of South Sea islands divided between Japan and Britain.

Dec. 11, 1914.

Allies in France pushed forward. Germans rushed heavy guns to Ostend.

Three German columns repulsed in Poland.

Austrians were defeated north of Kesmaj and Parovnitza. Sheikh Kiazim, chief of the Shites, proclaimed a holy war.

French capital moved back from Bordeaux to Paris.

Dec. 12, 1914.

Turkish fleet bombarded Batum. German aviator dropped shells on Hazebruck but was killed by French shells.

British consul dragged from Italian consulate at Hodeida by Turks.

American Red Cross shipped great quantity of hospital supplies. Rockefeller Foundation steamer sailed with \$400,000 cargo.

Allies drove Germans across the Yser canal.

Serbians repulsed Austrians at Kosmal. Lodz was evacuated by the Russians.

Conscience, Not Consequence. When you are in doubt as to the course to take, consult your conscience, not consequences. Do right, and never mind how things are going to turn out. One who steers his course so as to avoid everything unpleasant, makes a zigzag course, and may miss the harbor at last. Follow conscience, and leave consequences to God.

Optimistic Thought. When it is dark the coward is very valiant.

Eye to the Main Chance. On one of my shopping tours I took my neighbor's small daughter with me. I stopped to examine some handbags on the counter, and showed the child the pretty colors and ornamental clasp, when she solemnly remarked: "Please let me look inside and we'll take a one was a mos' money in it."—Exchange.

Forethought for Lovers. Never make up your mind definitely about a girl until you try her pie first. —Baltimore American.

WILD ANIMALS IN PANAMA

Their Usual Routine of Existence Disturbed by the Building of the Canal.

Wild turkeys give evidences of homesickness since they have been driven from the bottom lands in Panama owing to the construction of the canal. They wander about on the edge of the lake complaining, and it is easy to get within shooting distance of them. The Panama turkey is always thin and one is not more than enough for a meal for one man. Peccary, or wild pig, found frequently and in herds on the upper Chagres river, seems not to have been a habitant of the lower valley, as there are none along the edges of the newly formed lake. Wild goat, although found in the mountains of the western part of Panama, is not known in the lake region.

The marshes along the Chagres and the jungle adjoining them have been the home of many snakes, and these have been forced to higher land and the trees by the rise of the water. Forces of the lighthouse division, engaged in cutting vistas for the range lights in Gatun lake, are meeting with a real danger from the native rattlesnake, called "tomiga." Many of these snakes instead of taking to water-free ground have climbed into the branches of the trees and every clump of bamboo hides from one to a dozen. Boating the clump usually scares them into the water, when the clearing can be carried on from cayucos by the machete men, but occasionally one or more will remain and prepare to fight. In such cases the cayuco is pulled as near the clump as is safe and shot-guns are used in an attempt to kill the reptiles. If the shots miss, the snake, already coiled, springs at the boatmen.

Taking it to Himself. Leading Man—Did you make a hit at that society entertainment? Comedian—I did; but one thing made me sore.

"What was that?" The club quotation for the afternoon.

"Club quotation?" "Yes. At the top of the program was printed, 'I'd rather have a fool to make me sad' than experience to make me sad."—Youngstown Telegram.

A Serious Question. "Thackeray once had a novel turned down by seventeen different publishers."

"I've read that, and it gives me hope. I've had a novel turned down by every publisher I know of. But here's the question."

"Is it worth while starting a manuscript over the same route twice?"

Lacking. "What were the chief features of the street battle among these men, officer?"

"By the time I got there, there weren't no features left, your honor."

Way of the World. "The world owes us a living."

"Yes, and is always hanging back on the payments."

About the Size of It. She—What induces men to marry? He—The women, I believe.

Where She Scores a Hit. Singleton—A woman can't propel a stone with any degree of accuracy. Wedderly—No; but when it comes to throwing hints she rings the gong every time.

War Orders, All Right. "Are you getting any of the war-order business?" "Yes, indeed. We've sold two sets of dishes and four rolling-pins to Mrs. Jiggs within the last fortnight."

Can't Shut Her Up, Though. "Kate talks like a book."

"Yes; wonderful volume of speech." —Boston Transcript.

The entertainer who expects to get a laugh does not tell the funny story in the presence of his wife.

Some men outlive their usefulness if they live to be a day over twenty-one.

But many a fair woman is unfair.

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SACRED CITY OF THE JAINS

One of the Most Remarkable of the Sights the Traveler Sees in India.

Palitana is among the most wonderful places in that land of marvels. It is in the Kathiawar peninsula, to the north of Bombay, and is the capital of the small state of the same name which adjoins Baroda. The town stands on the Shetrunji river, whose overflowing has frequently caused disaster, and above rise the twin peaks of Shetrunji hill, nearly 2,000 feet above the plain. It is the most sacred of the five sacred hills of the Jains, and their temple city crowns the summit. The Jaina, who today form one of the large merchant castes, may be described as a heretical and ultra-humanitarian sect of Hinduism. Its founder was contemporary with Buddha. The Jains in all ages have been great temple builders; their most marked peculiarity in this respect being their tradition of building cities composed entirely of temples and containing no human habitations whatsoever.

Utah Furnishes Expo Material. The state of Utah has made another record, of which it is very proud. It seems that all the gypsum used in the construction of the San Diego fair buildings and 80 per cent of that used for the San Francisco fair came from the quarries near Nephi, Utah. It is now well known that gypsum is one of the oldest building materials. It was used extensively in the building of the pyramids and very largely in the construction of the monumental architectural edifices reared by the Greeks and the Romans.

The product of gypsum used in the fair buildings is known as "staff" and was used to imitate the famous Roman travertine. Of its beauty a thousand writers have written. Utah is proud that it furnished the material for the exposition structures and proud that it could have furnished the material for the wonders of the ancients.

Enemy of the Fern. One of the worst enemies of ferns indoors is the mealy bug. This is a white, woolly insect that clings close to the bottom of the fronds. When there is reason to suspect its presence the plant should be examined every day and all insects removed with a splinter or toothpick. If the infestation is bad, the whole top of the fern can be cut off to within an inch of the ground and then allowed to grow again after all the insects have been exterminated.

Curious Forms of Greeting. The kiss, the handshake and the bow are the salutations that are in the most universal use at the present day. Yet there exist races to whom these forms of greeting would seem to be ludicrous as their own customs seem to us.

Sign Language. "I hate to gossip about people, and yet I don't like to go around in society as a prude."

"No need to say a thing, my dear. Just elevate your eyebrows at the proper point and you'll get along."

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GREET VISITOR WITH TEARS

Strange Custom That Is Etiquette Among the Indians of Central South America.

A strange custom is the weeping salutation that has been observed among Central South American Indians. This form of greeting occurs, too, in the Adaman Islands, New Zealand, Polynesia. A Portuguese explorer describes the custom as he saw it used among a tribe of South American Indians:

"Whenever a guest enters a hut he is immediately honored, and made welcome by being wept over. Without a word being spoken he is led to the hammock. As soon as he is seated the hostess and her daughters, and any of their girl friends who happen to be in the house at the time, come and sit about the guest, touch him lightly with their fingers, and commence to weep loudly and to shed many tears. During this ceremony, in a sort of connected discourse, they recite everything that has happened to them recently, and talk of the hardships of the road that the visitor has suffered and of anything and everything that can arouse compassion and tears. The guest, his hand before his face, pretends to weep, and does not speak until the crying has gone on for some time. Then they all wipe away their tears and become as lively and merry as if they had never cried in all their lives."

Useful Knowledge. Marcella—Isn't it too bad Myrtle went and got married?

"Waverly—Why?" "She was such a fine typewriter and now all the time she spent learning the touch system will have been wasted."

"Oh, no it will not; she can use it on her husband."

Unofficial Library. "Well, how's things in Plunkville?" "Oh, so so."

"Got a circulating library in your town?"

"Mine is a sort of one, except that I don't get paid for books lost or kept indefinitely."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Rendered Town a Service. Native—"That's Eph Haskins over there. Son of the man that put our town on the map." Visitor—"How did he do it?" Native—"Made a special point to go to New York to die, and the papers there had, right out plain under the death notice, '